

Transcription of Gulf Coast Heritage Tourism/Finnish interview with Tanya Howard Hamilton, Finnish Lutheran Historical Foundation.

Transcribed by Reba Brown, SRGLH LA I

Tanya: Well Finland you know is next to Russia, which they went through several wars with Russia to win their independence. Finland is a very cold country. It can get dark at night 24 hours year-round so the people that come from there tend to be very hearty people and they like to fish and the timber industry and so that fit in with those who ended up coming to South Mississippi. It looks as though they came here in the early nineteen hundreds.

I think Gideon Laine, who was the manager of the Finnish Gulf Coast Land Company, came here in 1899 and then these other two gentlemen followed in 1901. They put together this pamphlet that gave an overview of the area. The temperatures the weather the cattle that could be raised here the vegetables, fruits, whatnot, and also about the fishing and then what I really love is the little map at the back of the pamphlet that shows the Mississippi Gulf Coast and the area that they were wanting for the Fins to colonize and that was called Swartwout, Mississippi which is now called Pecan area.

I put this on one of the Finnish Facebook pages a couple of years ago and it seems like there are other pamphlets that were similar to this but in different areas of the country so I believe they were just trying to entice the Finnish people to these different areas but majority of them settled up in Michigan, and Minnesota, and Canada, the weather that they were more used to and so many other families ended up moving back up North because of the humidity and they found out how things mildewed here (Laughs) they didn't like that so.

Well my mother's parents, their names were Koskela, and there are several Koskela's still around in the area. My dad's mother was born here but her parents came from Finland and her maiden name was Lokso. The Wachses* is another family that still here Koski's. I know, Saksa's, Maki's so there's yeah. Well I know my mother's name was Toini and I and her twin sister's name, although they call her Tiny, and Finnish it would be tuning and it's Thyne but you know so many of the Finnish names are kind of difficult for Americans to pronounce so I don't, I think they strayed away from those. (Laughs)

Well the most popular it would be the Finnish sweetbreads and the pulla which I know I'm not saying any more Finnish accent but yeah PULLA but everybody loved their Finnish sweetbreads.

Well Gideon Laine is the one who donated land for the church that that is on the- in Kreole at the time -Kreole at that point on the south side of the tracks was called Laine,

Mississippi now it's Kreole but it's a little one-room Church. The pews that are there are were handmade by the members and there is a pump organ there that's been there since 1912 and we still use it at Christmas you know when we have our Christmas carols.

This is the little charter where the church was originally chartered in 1904 and that's the Suomi-Synoodin and Suomi is the Finnish word for Finland so and my great-grandfather's name is on there, Johan Lokso, he was one of the charter members of the church.

At that time people didn't travel great distances to go to church so more of your local churches I think people attended and kind of swayed away from the Lutheran Church but this, at the time, they only had a Finnish minister that came twice a year. He would come for two weeks at a time, in the spring and in the fall, and have all the confirmations and the baptisms at that time and once a month they would meet in members' homes to have a little service you know whether they had a Finnish sermon that was mailed to them or a tape that they played, they would read scripture and they would sing songs so all of the members had these little song books that they would bring with them so it was yeah, as so it's like a Sunday-school songbook was what it was called but.

Finnish is a very difficult language but I think we all know our little phrases and words you know it we meet three times a year we have turned it into a Historical Society, the Finnish Lutheran Historical Society or Foundation of Kreole, Mississippi we did that in 1995 so we meet three times a year at the church. We have our March meeting which is like a business and membership meeting in October we have a picnic on the grounds and then the second Saturday in December we have our Christmas Silver Tea because when they did all their little meetings once a month they always called it silver tea but at Christmas which is hauskaa jouluaon a list of onnellista uutta vuotta, that's Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and we have joulupukki who is Santa he usually comes. We like luminaries and place them on the graves which is a tradition they do in Finland, usually on Christmas Eve, to remember their loved ones but you know we do that during our meetings.

There's a graveyard next to the church that's kind of a little picture with the luminaries leading up to the church and so yeah there the cemetery is really pretty when it's lit up with the luminaries at night but I know a couple of weeks ago it was so odd to see our little church pop up on one of the Facebook pages because they had been to our website and saw that so different people passing through the area they find out about the church they want to stop in and see it so you know we're always happy to do that. The Finnish Lutheran Historical Foundation of Kreole, Mississippi.

Transcribers Note:

*I cannot attest for the accuracy of the spelling of this name.

Brother of Charles - 1800? (Grandfather)

FAMILY GROUP NO.

Husband's Full Name

HARRIS HAMILTON

This Information Obtained From:

COMPUTERIZED
FAMILY FILE
Entry Sheet

Person Submitting Sheet:

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

File Number Of
This Family Group

No.

Date Submitted

Husband's Date	Day	Month	Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province, etc.	State or Country	Add. Info. on Husband
Birth			1805		TN	MS	
Chr'd							
Mar.							
Death			1859?				
Burial				old family Ely/Cumbe/Hairbanks lot			
Places of Residence							
Occupation							
Church Affiliation							
Military Rec.							
Other wives, if any, No. (1) (2) etc. Make separate sheet for each mar.							
His Father William Hamilton? Mother's Maiden Name							
Wife's Full Maiden Name MARY MARGARET ELY							
Wife's Date	Day	Month	Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province, etc.	State or Country	Add. Info. on Wife
Birth			2 OCT 1817	Jackson Co	MS		
Chr'd			7 July 1822	Mobile Co.	Catholic Records		
Death			14 Sept 1902				
Burial				Rose Dale Cem Harleston			
Places of Residence							
Occupation if other than housewife							
Church Affiliation							
Other husbands, if any, No. (1) (2) etc. Make separate sheet for each mar.							
Her Father ANTOINE ELY Mother's Maiden Name SARAH CUMBE (Sally)							

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Sex	Children's Name in Full (Arrange in order of birth)	Children's Date	Day	Month	Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province, etc.	State or Country	Add. Info. on Children
f	1 ALMEDI A. I. HAMILTON	Birth			Sept 1846	Hurley			
	Full Name of Spouse* 1853-1917 WILLIAM D. CRAWFORD	Mar.			7 NOV 1880				
		Death			JUNE 1932				
		Burial				Both in Coleman Cem. Hurley			
f	2 ANNIE ANONIA HAMILTON	Birth			12 DEC 1850	Hurley			
	Full Name of Spouse* 1849-1933 ELISHA CRAWFORD	Mar.							
		Death			20 JAN 1937				
		Burial				Both in Coleman Cem. Hurley			
M	3 MALCOLM HAMILTON	Birth			27 JAN 1851	Hurley			
	Full Name of Spouse* Maybelle Kelley?	Mar.							
		Death			12 APR 1911				
		Burial				Hamilton Cem. Hurley			
f	4 SUSAN HAMILTON	Birth			1855				
	Full Name of Spouse* never married	Mar.							
		Death							
		Burial				Johnson Cem. Wades			
M	5 WILLIAM HAMILTON	Birth			4 APR 1858				
	Full Name of Spouse* Geneva Roberts	Mar.							
		Death			12 July 1907 12 Oct 1934				
		Burial				Rosedale Cem. Harleston			
f	6 SARAH HAMILTON	Birth			8 Jan 1857				
	Full Name of Spouse* J. RUFUS PARKER	Mar.							
		Death			14 Feb 1919				
		Burial				Johnson Cem. Wades			
	7	Birth							
		Mar.							
	Full Name of Spouse*	Death							
		Burial							
	8	Birth							
		Mar.							
	Full Name of Spouse*	Death							
		Burial							
	9	Birth							
		Mar.							
	Full Name of Spouse*	Death							
		Burial							
	10	Birth							
		Mar.							
	Full Name of Spouse*	Death							
		Burial							

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*If married more than once No. each mar. (1) (2) etc. and list in "Add. info. on children" column. Use reverse side for additional children, other notes, references or information.

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